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Cc: []

Bcc: []

From: CN=Phil North/OU=R10/O=USEPA/C=US

Sent: Wed 1/4/2012 8:56:18 PM

Subject: 2011 Alaska Fish Factor

I highlighted the most relevant items.

Fish Factor: A 2011 Alaska fisheries retrospective

By Laine Welch | For The Capital City Weekly

Alaska's seafood industry continued its mission to ramp up its message to policy makers, especially those from rail belt regions who tend to overlook its economic significance.

How important is the seafood industry to Alaska and the nation? At a glance: 62 percent of all U.S. seafood landings come from Alaska, as does 96 percent of all U.S. wild-caught salmon. Seafood is by far Alaska's number one export, valued at nearly \$2 billion (next in line: zinc and lead exports at \$785 million); and Alaska ranks ninth in the world in terms of global seafood production.

The industry provides more than 70,500 Alaska jobs, more than oil and gas, mining, tourism and timber combined. The seafood industry is second only to Big Oil in revenues it generates to Alaska's general fund each year.

Alaska's abundant and sustainable fishery resources are the envy of all other seafood producers, and its fishery management is regarded as a model around the world.

Here are some fishing notables from 2011, in no particular order, some of which are included in the annual Fish Picks and Pans:

- Halibut catches continued to tumble. The Pacific coast-wide catch limit was cut by 19 percent to 41 million pounds. Fishery managers put the industry on notice that catches could be reduced drastically in the very near future.
- Kodiak toppled Homer as the number one halibut port for landings for the first time since 1996.
- Polls continued to show that a majority of Alaska voters oppose the Pebble Mine project, and lack trust in both foreign mining and Alaska's permitting process.
- It took six years, but the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries/Financial Services Branch finally began accepting loan applications for skippers and crew who want to buy into the Bering Sea crab fisheries.
- For the first time, researchers caught sperm whales on video biting long lines at one end and shaking the fish free, similar to shaking apples from a tree. The video is part of SEASWAP, the Southeast Alaska Sperm Whale Avoidance Project.
- The Department of Commerce and NOAA released draft aquaculture policies that aim to "increase the U.S. supply of healthy seafood."
- For the first time, fishery managers set a cap on the number of salmon that can be taken as bycatch by Gulf trawlers.
- Recycled seawater began warming the Ted Stevens Research Institute in Juneau instead of oil.
- The value of Alaska fishing permits and catch shares took a big jump along with fish prices. At Bristol Bay, most drift permits were being offered at \$160,000, up from \$132,000 in 2010, and more than double the price in 2009. In prime fishing regions of Southeast Alaska and the central Gulf, halibut shares ranged from \$30 to \$36 per pound.
- Hundreds of one-ton sacks of pollock bone meal were shipped from Dutch Harbor to California to remove lead from neighborhoods. The calcium phosphate in the fish neutralizes the toxic metal.
- Fish tags with iPhone technology were used for the first time to track halibut migrations based on the earth's magnetic field. The invention of the iPhone and its advancements made the pitch and roll detectors small enough to put in fish tags.
- Dock prices for Alaska halibut and black cod (sablefish) broke records, topping \$7 and \$9 per pound, respectively.
- Likewise, advance prices for Bristol Bay red king crab were \$9 a pound. A reduced harvest of just 8 million pounds had buyers scrambling for crab.
- Crabbers in Southeast Alaska also dropped pots for red king crab for the first time in six years when a fishery opened on Nov. 1.
- Bering Sea crabbers were shocked at a catch increase for snow crab, Alaska's largest crab fishery. The harvest for the 2011-2012 season was boosted by 64 percent to nearly 90 million pounds.
- Shrimp, canned tuna and salmon remained as America's seafood favorites, although seafood consumption dropped to 15.8 pounds per person.
- The state took two years to deny a citizens' petition aimed at protecting Cook Inlet fisheries from coal mining. The petition asked that buffer zones be required to protect salmon streams of the Chitna River should Alaska's largest coal mine be built in the area.
- State officials said there was "no reason to panic" and that Alaska salmon are "relatively safe" from a deadly fish virus that appeared for the first time in Pacific waters. British Columbia said it will test 8,000 wild and farmed salmon for signs of the virus.
- Anchorage ranked first for Alaska cities with the most resident skippers and crew at more than 1,800.
- At \$603 million, Alaska's 2011 salmon catch is the third most valuable since 1975 and likely to end up at number two after final sales are reported by processors and buyers next spring. (Alaska's most valuable salmon season was \$725 million in 1988.)
- Southeast Alaska ranked first in the state with the most valuable salmon harvest at \$203 million ex-vessel, a \$70 million increase over 2010. Bristol Bay came in second with a value of \$137 million, compared to \$185 million the previous year.
- The 2011 pink salmon harvest of 116 million fish was valued at over \$170 million, an all time record. Chum salmon rang in at \$93 million, the third highest value; sockeye salmon were worth almost \$296 million, ranking at sixth place among historic sockeye harvests. Chinook and coho harvests, at \$20 and \$23 million, were in the middle of their historic values.
- Alaska processors continued to ramp up their output of customer-friendly salmon fillets. Production

approached 20 million pounds, and increase of 26 percent. More than 6 million pounds of salmon fillets went out fresh this summer, a gain of 30 percent.

- For the first time ever, fresh and frozen pink salmon wholesaled for virtually the same price this summer, about \$1.45 per pound.

- A new McDowell Group analysis revealed that sea otter predation on local fisheries has cost Southeast Alaska's economy more than \$28 million in direct and indirect impacts since 1995.

- Alaska Senators Murkowski and Begich, along with Rep. Don Young, introduced legislation to stop genetically modified salmon (called "Frankenfish") from getting to US markets, and to require labeling should it get federal approval.

- Marubeni Corporation, parent company of North Pacific Seafoods, purchased the Yardarm Knot processing plant at Naknek, making it Japan's largest sockeye salmon buyer.

- Dutch Harbor ranked as the nation's number one port for seafood landings for the 22nd year in a row.

2011 FISH PICKS AND PANS

Best fish partnerships: The fishermen financed/operated Regional Seafood Development Associations for Bristol Bay and Prince William Sound/Copper River

Best Alaska seafood cheerleaders: ASMI (Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute)

Best fish outreach: Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Agents

Best future fish eaters ambassador: GAPP (Genuine AK Pollock Producers) for getting top quality seafood onto America's school lunch trays

Best Fish Samaritans: UFA and AFIRM (Alaska Fishing Industry Relief Mission)

Best fish invention: Nanolce from Iceland, made of crystallized ice particles that can be pumped into a hold or container to cover fish. The generators use 90 percent less refrigerant and 70 percent less power than conventional ice making machines.

Best celebrates local fish town: Cordova

Best fish feeders: Sea Share and Kodiak processors and fishermen who partnered to donate bycatch to food banks

Fishiest best available science snafu: NMFS' questionable biological opinion on impacts of Steller sea lions on western Aleutian fisheries. Resulting closures to the cod and Atka mackerel fisheries cost the industry \$200 million a year.

Biggest fish shocker: Arne Fuglvog

Best fish clean up: The Juneau-based Marine Conservation Alliance, in partnership with local communities, hauled away more than two million pounds of coastal debris since 2003 from Southeast to the Pribilofs (including a derelict fishing vessel).

Best She Fish: Cora Campbell, Commissioner ADF&G

Best fish byproducts booster: Peter Bechtel, UAF/USDA and Scott Smiley, Kodiak Fisheries & Marine Science Ctr.

Biggest fish blunder: Trading 11 miles of productive salmon streams on the Chuitna River for low grade coal for China

Scariest fish story: Ocean acidification

Best fish news site: www.seafood.com

Best fish PR: Norton Sound Seafood House at Ted Stevens Int'l Airport/Anchorage

Biggest fish slam: The state siding with the Pebble Partnership in court to prevent Lake & Peninsula residents from voting on the Save Our Salmon initiative

Biggest fish snub (third year in a row): Cynthia Carroll, CEO of Anglo American/Pebble Mine who told Bristol Bay residents, "If the people don't want the mine, we won't build it."

Biggest fish waste: Alaska spending \$20 million on Peruvian fish feed for its 33 salmon hatcheries while sending 200,000 tons of homemade fish feeds to Asia.

Biggest fish stall: The U.S. still not signing on to the Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST), meaning it has no claims to the Arctic

Best fish advocates: Alaska Congressional Delegation: Lisa, Mark and Don

Trickiest fish solution: Sea otters vs. fisheries in Southeast Alaska

Most troublesome fish dilemma: Millions of pounds of halibut taken as bycatch while sport and commercial catches get trimmed.

Biggest fish story of 2010: Federal guidelines for the first time recommend that Americans eat two seafood meals a week. That means new meal guidelines are required in schools, military mess halls, VA hospitals, prisons and other federally backed institutions.

This year marks the 21st year for the weekly Fish Factor column that focuses on Alaska's seafood industry. It began in 1991 in the Anchorage Daily News, and now appears in more than 20 newspapers and websites. A daily spin off — Fish Radio — airs weekdays on 30 radio stations in Alaska. The goal of both is to make people aware of the economic, social and cultural importance of Alaska's fishing industry, and to inspire more people to join its ranks.

Laine Welch has been covering news of Alaska's fishing industry since 1988. She lives in Kodiak.

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"To protect your rivers, protect your mountains."